

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In one embodiment of the invention, an anterior fixation system includes a plate defining a plurality of screw holes, a number of screws and a number of locking assemblies for fixing the screws to the plate. The system includes two bone screws, a fixed angle screw and a variable angle screw, that are configured to extend through the same screw openings in the fixation plate. The surgeon can select either the fixed or variable angled screws to be implanted with a single plate and can place either type of screw into any of the screw holes along the plate. The fixation plate according to the invention can include several screw holes in various patterns that provide the surgeon with great flexibility in the placement of bone screws depending upon the spinal anatomy and pathology. The invention further contemplates a locking assembly to lock one or more bone screws within a respective screw hole. In one embodiment, the locking assembly includes a washer that is held to the plate by a staked locking screw. The washer includes an outer surface that overlaps one or more screw holes. The washer is initially loosely held to the plate by the locking screw so that various tools and bone screws can be passed through the screw holes. In one embodiment of the washer, the washer includes cut-outs corresponding to the screw holes, along with a notch and key configuration for setting the locking washer in its locked configuration.